

Mik Critchlow - *The Documentary Approach*

I am delighted to announce that our next Kirkbymoorside Camera Club speaker, on 19th November, will be Mik Critchlow. Born in 1955, Mik is a social documentary photographer who has spent over 40 years charting the lives of the people of his home town of Ashington, on the Northumberland coast.

His initial inspiration for the project came from an exhibition of paintings by 'The Ashington Group' of 'pitmen painters' in 1977. As a miner's son himself, Mik possesses a deep-rooted empathy for the community where he was born and grew up. This comes through strongly in his work, where gritty realism is tempered by an emotional connection with his subjects and their way of life.



Mik's recent book 'Coal Town' (Bluecoat Press, 2019) provides a fascinating glimpse into this community built around a single industry, and provides a poignant record of its sudden demise. As the introduction to the book points out: 'Once there were over 140 working mines in Northumberland, 47 in Ashington alone. By the time Mik began, there was only a handful left and he's managed to photograph each of (them)!'



Mik's work has been published widely, with recent exhibitions including: 'Forever Amber' - Laing Art Gallery 2014, 'The Share' - Northern Rock Gallery 2014, 'About The North - Imagined Dialogues' - Side Gallery 2018, 'Pitmen Painters Unseen' - Woodhorn Museum 2018, 'WORK+WORKERS' - Side Gallery 2019. He is now collating images for a new book based on his 'Seafarers' series, which documents the working life of merchant seamen, including the 1988 National Union of Seamen's dispute with employers.

You can find Mik's work at www.mikcritchlow.com, and on Twitter @mikcritchlow. Book your place to hear Mik's talk via Zoom at: www.kirkbymoorside-camera-club.co.uk/programme

